

FORM B – BUILDING

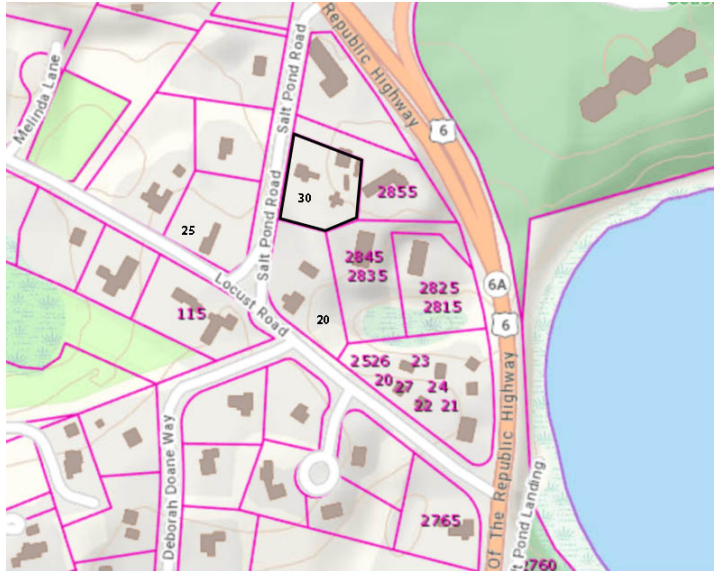
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



View from NW.

Locus Map (north at top)



Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson
Larson Fisher Associates

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: June 2020

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

12-49

ORLEANS

EAS.113

NR HD 2001

Town/City: Town of Eastham

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Old Town Center

Address: 30 Salt Pond Road

Historic Name: Joseph M. & Jane Cobb House
Comfort Cottage

Uses: Present: single-family residence / lodging house

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: 1842-50

Source: deeds, vital records, censuses, probate

Style/Form: Greek Revival/end house

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard & wood shingle/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Barn
Guest house
Sheds

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Shed dormers & rear addition, early 20th c.

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.67

Setting: The house is situated in a historic community group known as the Old Town Center. The historic properties have been subdivided and now are in the midst of mid-20th-century residential development.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Joseph M. & Jane Cobb House, built ca. 1845, is a story-and-a-half wood frame dwelling of the end house type now overwhelmed by early-20th-century additions. The gabled street façade contains an entrance in a restrained trabeated enframing on one side offset by two windows. Trim in the corners and along the roof edge are of an equally modest scale indicating the reduction of Greek Revival-style features at mid-century. The plan of the small dwelling has two principal rooms on one side and an entry hall and back room on the other. The expected chimney positioned in the partition between the two rooms likely was removed when shed dormers were raised on both sides of the roof later. Notable are two small square windows under the eaves flanking two of regular size in the center of the gable. The northerly side of the house contains two windows evidently in their original locations. However, the opposite southerly side was renovated when the dormers and an addition more than doubling the size of the house were constructed when the house was repurposed as a summer boarding house in 1912 or later. (The addition may contain or have replaced a smaller kitchen wing.) A new door and window were installed in the southerly side of the old house, with the entrance linked to the three-bay façade of the addition by a long, colonnaded veranda. A more prominent entrance is located at the westerly corner of the façade; a gabled open pavilion with kneewalls was later added to the porch in front of it. The entrance is offset by a four-part window unit and three windows evenly spaced across the second story. This feature together with a large brick chimney engaged to the east end suggests there was a great room in this part of the plan. A one-story, shed roof wing is appended to the northerly side of the addition.

A story-and-a-half wood frame barn northeast of the house appears to be of equal age with the house. It was renovated and repurposed as a bike shop many years ago. A one-story annex with additional rooms for tourists was built southeast of the house during its heyday as the Comfort Cottage. The property was reduced in size by subdivision in 1951 and lots fronting on Route 6 were sold for commercial redevelopment.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The house numbered 30 Salt Pond Road was built between 1842 and 1850 by Joseph Myrick Cobb (1813-78), a son of Thomas Cobb (1775-1859) and his first wife, Abigail Freeman (1771-1816). In 1842 Joseph M. Cobb married Jane Wixon of Harwich, and though he bought land in Eastham in 1842 and 1843 his house was built on land owned by his father. His father's 1854 will stated that while he lived his second wife Betsey Mayo Chipman (1778-1861) was to have the use and improvement of his entire estate "except the lot of land on which my son Joseph M. Cobb's [house] now stands, as it is now enclosed, as the fence and yard now stand." The 1850 census lists Joseph Cobb as a farmer in this neighborhood with \$214 in real property; by then he and his wife had three children—Dorcas D., born in 1843; Joshua Atwood (1844-54), and Lucy Howes (1850-51). In 1854, the year Joshua died, another son, Joseph A., was born; and a daughter named for deceased infant Lucy was born in 1856. The 1858 map attaches the name "J. M. Cobb" to the house at 30 Salt Pond Road.¹

The 1860 federal census describes Joseph M. Cobb as a peddler, and local historian Elizabeth Pratt stated that he kept "a wagon on wheels selling household necessities."² In 1865 the state census identified him as insane, and the 1870 census does not show the family in the neighborhood, but Joseph M. Cobb died in Eastham in October 1878. The 1880 census lists his son Joseph A. Cobb, a fisherman, in the house with his widowed mother, and a boarding fisherman; the 1880 Eastham map attached no name to the 30 Salt Pond Road dwelling.

Joseph A. Cobb married twice, first in 1881 to Mary L. B. Hussey, a Cambridge native and teacher in Orleans, and second, in 1888, to Eleanor Lemina Warren (1868-1930), who had come from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Massachusetts in 1885. Cobb had farmed in Eastham, but in 1887 he bought a share of a hotel in Woburn and moved there to manage it; he returned to Eastham in January 1888. His mother, Jane Wixon Cobb, died in 1890, the same year that Joseph and Eleanor Cobb's daughter Mabel was born. By the last years of that decade Joseph and Eleanor Cobb moved to Cambridge and then East Boston. There Cobb

¹ Thomas Cobb died in 1859, and two years later his house, occupied by his widow Betsey and her brother Elisha Mayo, burned; Betsey Cobb was killed in the fire. By 1865 Elisha Mayo was a pauper and living in the home of Isaac and Phebe Doane. See "Eastham Items.—Sad and Fatal Occurrence," *Yarmouth Register*, 20 December 1861, 2.

² See MHC building form for 30 Salt Pond Road, undated (but 1985).

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worked as a teamster and kept a small number of lodgers. The 1902 Eastham tax records list him as a resident of East Boston owning an Eastham home valued at \$500, a barn at \$150, a henhouse at \$35, and ten acres. The 30 Salt Pond Road house is marked "J. Cobb" on the 1905 Eastham map.

The Cobbs moved back to their native town in 1907. "Mr Joseph A Cobb and family of East Boston, after several years of city experience, have resumed a permanent residence in our midst, and we are glad to welcome them back," the *Yarmouth Register* reported in May. "Would that other sons and daughters of the Old Colony might follow this good example."³ The 1910 census lists Joseph A. Cobb as a laborer living with his wife and their daughter Mabel, then eighteen years old and working as a teacher of elocution.

Like other Eastham residents, they boarded summer residents, but by 1912 the Cobbs had turned it into a more thoroughgoing commercial venture. By 1912 Cape newspapers were calling the 30 Salt Pond Road house "Comfort Cottage." Cobb was identified as a boardinghouse keeper in a 1919 newspaper account and in the 1920 census, and the 1929 Cape directory listed him among seventeen other Cape residents offering board and rooms. At some undetermined point, the Cobbs built a cottage on the property, also for seasonal visitors.

In November 1929 Joseph A. Cobb died suddenly. "Mr. Cobb was born in the same house in which he was living, being the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cobb," his *Hyannis Patriot* obituary stated. "For several years he lived in East Boston. About twenty-five years ago he returned to Eastham, and made many friends as manager of 'Comfort Cottage' which he called his home and in which he catered to a large number of summer guests."⁴

In 1914 Joseph A. Cobb sold his 1.2-acre homestead to his daughter Mabel, who two years earlier had married Eastham peddler Leslie Emerson Chase (1885-1952), one of the sons of Charles Whitman and Hattie F. Gill Chase.⁵ In 1915 Cape newspapers reported that the couple's "new house" was soon to be finished (probably on the site of 2855 State Highway), and the 1930 census lists Joseph Cobb's widow Eleanor in the household of Leslie and Mabel Chase and their three young children, Joseph R, Charles W., and Maud W. According to Pratt, Mabel Cobb Chase kept 30 Salt Pond Road for summer guests but did not serve meals. Her husband carried Eastham students to Orleans High School in his truck under contract to the town and carried Eastham produce to Boston; he was also, for many years beginning in 1921, the town clerk, treasurer, and tax collector and president of the Eastham Farmers Association, identified in one newspaper as an asparagus growers' cooperative.

Leslie Chase died in 1952, and Mabel Cobb Chase died in 1975. In 1992 their son J. Russell Chase sold 30 Salt Pond Road to Melissa A. Ayala as trustee of Comfort Cottage Trust, the owner of record in 2020.⁶ In that year the barn on the property housed Little Capistrano Bike Shop.

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³ "Eastham," *Yarmouth Register*, 4 May 1907, 5.

⁴ "Joseph A. Cobb," *Hyannis Patriot*, 21 November 1929, 6.

⁵ Joseph A Cobb to Mabel W Chase, 16 November 1914, BCD 332:597. The deed does not mention the presence of buildings.

⁶ J. Russell Chase, individually and as administrator estate Mabel W. Chase, 20 Salt Pond Road, to Melissa A. Ayala, trustee Comfort Cottage Trust, Brewster, 2 April 1992, BCD 7959:304. See J. Russell Chase, individually and as administrator estate Mabel W. Chase, 20 Salt Pond Road, to Melissa A. Ayala, trustee Comfort Cottage Trust, Brewster, 2 April 1992, BCD 7959:304.

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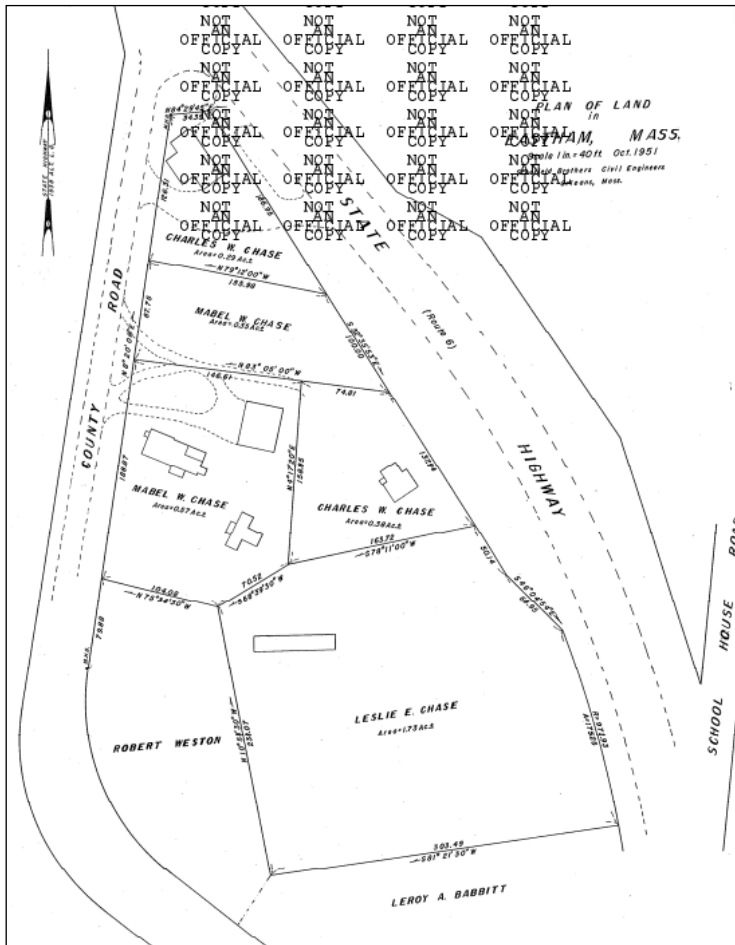
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SUPPLEMENTAL IMAGES



The 30 Salt Pond Road house, barn, and cottage are depicted on "County Road" on the Mabel W. Chase parcel on this 1951 plan (BCP 105:21).

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PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2019 unless otherwise noted)



View from south.



View of barn from NW.